



## ***REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT AD- HOC COMMITTEE***

The meeting of the Miami Springs Revitalization and Redevelopment Ad-Hoc Committee was held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 2, 2011 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

### **1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m.

Present were:           Laz Martínez  
                              Arturo Rabade  
                              Wade Smith  
                              Todd Stiff  
                              Joe Valencia (\*arrived at 6:35 p.m.)

Also Present:           City Attorney Jan K. Seiden  
                              City Planner Richard Ventura  
                              Deputy City Clerk Suzanne Hitaffer  
                              Board Secretary Lina Bryon

### **2. Selection of Committee Officers**

City Attorney Jan K. Seiden said that the first item of business would be the selection of officers. He suggested nominating a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair would run the meetings and if that person is not available the responsibility would fall upon the Vice Chair.

Wade Smith nominated Laz Martinez for Chairman. Arturo Rabade seconded the motion, which carried 4-0 on voice vote.

Chairman Martinez asked for a nomination for Vice Chairman. Wade Smith nominated Todd Stiff and Arturo Rabade seconded the motion, which carried 4-0 on voice vote.

### **3. Discussion of Council Directives for Committee Work**

City Attorney Seiden stated that the City Clerk had provided information to the members on the duties and responsibilities of the Committee. His impression is that the Board is to be a sounding board for citizen and business community comments on the various proposals from the consultants working on Downtown, N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street and other commercial area revitalization. The main charge will be to draw out public comment on the various topics.

City Attorney Seiden explained that the City Clerk's Office would assist with scheduling the meeting dates, based on availability of the Council Chambers. He would recommend topics of discussion related to Downtown revitalization and the meetings will be publicly noticed with the intent of receiving comments from the business community and citizens. The main idea is to encourage participation and the Board would be a collection place for debate and comments. The minutes of the meetings will provide information to Council; there is nothing wrong with the Ad-Hoc Committee coming to a decision based upon what is heard from the people.

The City Attorney said that it is a general feeling that the Ad-Hoc Committee members, the adjunct members and the City Planner will participate in the process. Anyone who has an idea should be encouraged to come to the meetings and put their opinions in the record so there is no confusion or misinterpretations. The different opinions that are expressed will give Council direction as to how the community feels about a particular issue.

City Attorney Seiden offered suggestions for important topics, including the Circle, Westward Drive, downtown parking, color palettes, and storefront designs. He added that the Committee could address specific areas within the City and it would be their decision to determine what topics they want to address and set an appropriate agenda. The revitalization consultants are primarily concerned with N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street as Council has set a deadline for implementing district boundary regulations, but they are available to consult on other areas. He said that at each meeting the members should agree and set the agenda for the next meeting so that plenty of notice can be given to the public.

Chair Martinez asked about the involvement of the consultants in the Ad-Hoc meetings and who would decide if they will be able to participate.

City Attorney Seiden responded that within the minutes of the meeting, the Committee should request the participation of the consultants at the next meeting so that it can be authorized by Council since they are paid on a per hour basis. He clarified that the Ad-Hoc Committee will need authorization for the expenditure of funds.

Chair Martinez understood that Council approves work orders for the Consultants. He said that if the Ad-Hoc Committee wanted the Consultants at their next meeting they would have to wait for the next Council meeting to occur before the Consultants would be granted the right to participate. He was concerned that the work that the Ad-Hoc Committee wants the Consultants to do would have to be authorized by Council, which could take two months.

City Attorney Seiden felt that the topics the Committee would be discussing would not take that much time for the Consultants to come back. He suggested general topics for the first few meetings so that the public can give their views on matters of general concern. At this point, the services of the Consultants may not be available because they are spending most of their time dealing with N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

Chair Martinez thought that the Ad-Hoc Committee should focus on N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street since it is a top priority and their job is to solicit feedback from the community. He said that this is only his opinion and he knows that the other members must agree.

Vice Chair Stiff asked what would be the shortest time frame between the Ad-Hoc Committee meetings because of the advertising requirements.

City Attorney Seiden responded that the Committee would probably not meet more than once a week and he doubts that they will meet weekly.

Vice Chair Stiff stated that once the next agenda is set, he would like the meeting to be relatively soon as they want to move ahead expeditiously. He asked if the meetings had to be advertised in the River Cities Gazette.

The City Attorney said that the advertisements in the Gazette are usually public notices and if this is something that Council or the Administration feels should be done, it is not a problem, except that the Gazette only publishes a few times each month. The normal procedure is to post the agenda throughout the City and the responsibility to spread the word will be the Committee members, Council members and the Chamber of Commerce members. The idea is to fill the Council Chambers in order to receive input.

Vice Chair Stiff explained that Council's decision to form this Committee was a close vote. He knows the Committee has no power and they can only make recommendations that Council could approve or reject. He said that Council must have confidence in the Committee's work in order for them to approve their recommendations. He feels that the work of the Committee would save time for the City Council.

City Attorney Seiden stated that all the opinions that are expressed will be in the Ad-Hoc Committee minutes and Council will review those minutes. The Committee will discuss what they hear from the community and try to narrow the issues. The non-quasi judicial boards are simply advisory boards that function to make the job of the City Council easier. He said that no board of the City meets more than once a month and the meeting date will have to be coordinated with the Clerk's Office, since there is limited availability to the Council Chambers. He felt that it would be unlikely for the Committee to meet more than twice a month.

Mr. Smith said that if a topic comes up and the Committee wants Calvin, Giordano & Associates to be involved it is conceivable that it could take one or two months to get approval from Council.

City Attorney Seiden agreed with Mr. Smith that it might be one month, but not two months.

Discussion ensued regarding possible meeting dates based on the Chairman's preference for Monday evenings.

The City Attorney recommended that the meeting time should be 7:00 p.m. since the idea is to attract citizen input and some residents are not home from work before that time. The meetings could be scheduled for the third Monday of each month, subject to Council approval. Since the 36<sup>th</sup> Street topic is prevalent in everyone's mind, the Committee will not have to task the Consultants because they are already working on this project. The initial Ad-Hoc Committee meeting could be based on Calvin, Giordano's presentation at the meeting tonight at 7:00 p.m.

City Attorney Seiden said that if N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street is being handled in a manner that does not require the work of the Ad-Hoc Committee, then all members should consider what topics they want to present on an agenda. He would suggest at least two or three topics for an agenda and those that are not addressed could be carried forward to the next meeting. He said that the more ideas the Committee brings forward the better it will be.

\*Joe Valencia arrived at this time.

Vice Chair Stiff asked if the Ad-Hoc Committee could be on the distribution list for all correspondence from the Consultants or anything that they produce.

The City Attorney agreed that the Ad-Hoc Committee members should receive the materials since it would be counterproductive not to receive them. He added that any requests for what the Committee needs could be referenced in the minutes and the Secretary of the Board will take care of the documentation.

To answer Vice Chair Stiff's question, City Attorney Seiden said that there is no need for the Committee to have a Council liaison since Council will be following the Committee's recommendations in order to help them in making their decisions.

Chair Martinez asked when Council would consider the Consultant's proposal for the N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street recommendations. He felt that the Ad-Hoc Committee members should get back to Council either individually or as a group with their feedback on this topic. He personally has a lot of questions on the package and this should be the top priority.

City Attorney Seiden stated that the questions raised in the joint meeting will go into the minutes. There is no problem if an Ad-Hoc Committee member wants to speak with the Council member that appointed them. The idea of communication is through the process and even though it would not violate the Sunshine law to speak with other Council members, it would be similar to lobbying. He reiterated that it is important for comments to be made on the record and to bridge the gap between the elected officials and their constituents.

#### **4. Instructions Regarding the Sunshine Law**

City Attorney Seiden explained that the Sunshine Law requires any meeting in which a board or an elected body meets to make a decision on an issue, or attempts to have a discussion that will eventually reach the decision making level, to be advertised so that the public can participate and minutes must be taken.

The City Attorney explained that no two members can discuss any of the issues involving the board or any topic that may come before the board outside of the public meeting. The Sunshine law gives the public access to the meetings and allows them to observe each step of the decision making process. It is fine for two members to have lunch as long as they do not discuss issues that will come through the board to a decision making process.

Joe Valencia asked if there were any ethic rules that apply to the Committee.

The City Attorney responded that there are a million ethics rules, but none apply to the Committee.

Another part of the Sunshine Law requires reasonable notice for public meetings in a timely fashion, according to Attorney Seiden. This does not always require a newspaper advertisement, but his policy is to do whatever is reasonable in order to get the information to as many people as possible. The local paper is a good means of reaching out to the public, but if this is not possible, the notice is posted in as many public locations as possible. If two Council members wanted to participate in the meeting, then it would require advertising as a Council meeting and minutes must be taken. He did not feel that this would apply to this Committee.

City Attorney Seiden added that one member of the Committee could be designated to conduct independent research on any particular topic and they would report back to the other members in a public forum.

Mr. Smith said that he sees the Committee as a group who has been charged with the responsibility of clearing up misinformation as far as revitalization and redevelopment is concerned. He explained that there is so much concern about Westward Drive, which is not a priority at this time and this is overshadowing what is being done on N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

The City Attorney explained that Council wants to streamline the process to attract developers and assist them with what they want to do, which is in the best interest of the City, the community and the developer. He said that during the annexation meetings that he attended there was always a dispute about dividing the land between cities and the comment was made that Miami Springs does not deserve additional land because they had not developed existing property on 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

City Attorney Seiden stated that there was a question when the Ad-Hoc Committee was being considered about a conflict with the Architectural Review Board. He feels that the Architectural Review Board is more regulation and design oriented, while the Ad-Hoc Committee is more oriented towards the public.

The City Attorney explained that people may be more comfortable expressing their opinions to the Ad-Hoc Committee since they are citizens just like they are. The goal is to sort out the good and bad points and how things can get done for the betterment of the community.

Chair Martinez asked if the Administration would help to spread the word to the public about the Ad-Hoc Committee meetings.

City Attorney Seiden responded that the Clerk's Office, through the Administration, will post the meeting agenda everywhere they can, place it on the website and include it on the Bulletin Board on cable Channel 77.

Chair Martinez said that he would like to inform the public of the Revitalization and Redevelopment Ad-Hoc Committee members and that they are available for public input. There are many people who are concerned about voicing their opinion in public and it would be beneficial to get feedback from those people. He would agree with the City Attorney that people should come to the meetings and make their comments part of the record, but there have been many meetings when people refused to speak.

City Attorney Seiden explained that it would be okay for residents to approach an Ad-Hoc Committee member with their comments, as long as it is only one member and not a group. The only problem is that the Committee member would then have the responsibility of repeating the comments verbatim and not changing them in any way. As a matter of practice, the function of the Committee is to encourage public participation during the meetings, for the record, and allow the opportunity to hear, listen, debate and discuss.

City Attorney Seiden clarified that the meetings would be advertised, but it is not appropriate to advertise the Committee members' personal information, addresses or telephone numbers.

## **5. Scheduling of Future Meetings**

City Attorney Seiden suggested that the Committee members should schedule a meeting for Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The agenda topic will be discussion regarding the presentation from Calvin, Giordano & Associates.

Vice Chair Stiff said that he would also like an agenda item introducing the Committee members to the community. This is an opportunity for each member to tell who they are and what they hope to accomplish. He would also like general discussion in regard to revitalization and Westward Drive, since there is misinformation circulating in the City that should be explained.

City Attorney Seiden asked if there was a consensus among the other members to accept Mr. Stiff's suggestions for the agenda items, and if so, then the items could be placed on the agenda. If there is a disagreement, then a vote is required.

Chairman Martinez said that because of the controversy about Westward Drive he would be concerned that the first meeting might get “derailed” with this discussion. He personally has concerns with bringing this up on the agenda at this early stage in the process. He asked for the opinions of the other members.

Vice Chair Stiff said that he would agree with the Chairman, but this would allow the opportunity to explain to people that there are no plans for tearing down Westward Drive. He does not feel that it will “derail” the meeting; it will give them a comfort level that the Ad-Hoc Committee does not support drastically changing the City.

Mr. Valencia asked if the Committee could take a more general view of development opportunities and possible improvements everywhere in the City without targeting one specific area.

Chair Martinez said that he would not be concerned about clarifying the plans for Westward Drive, but he does not want it to take on a life of its own, especially since it is the first meeting. He agrees with Mr. Valencia that the members should talk about their views in general to revitalize all areas, not just Westward Drive. His worry is that it has been a sensitive topic.

Mr. Rabade suggested that for the first meeting the agenda should be limited to the N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor as it is being proposed by the Consultants. This makes sense to him because it is the outer boundary of the City that is seen by everyone.

City Attorney Seiden stated that N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street could be the first agenda item and the second could be discussion of ideas for revitalization and redevelopment. Mr. Stiff could address his ideas for Westward Drive during that discussion and other members might want to discuss development in other areas, which is fine. Each member should have the opportunity to say where they stand on the general topic of revitalization and redevelopment and this will give everyone an introduction of the Ad-Hoc Committee members.

Chair Martinez agreed that the City Attorney’s recommendation was a good compromise.

Vice Chair Stiff clarified that there would be two agenda items: 1) N. W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor recommendations from the Consultants; 2) Introduction of the Committee to the community.

By consensus, the Committee agreed with the Vice Chair’s recommendation for the agenda items for the meeting of Monday, February 21, 2011.

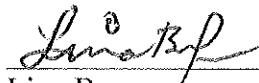
Chamber of Commerce representative Donna Wood-Beney of 3971 N. W. 65 Avenue, Virginia Gardens said that as an adjunct member, the Chamber would help to publicize the meetings on the community calendar that is available on-line. They can also write a press release for the Chamber’s web page and she would welcome all suggestions for the composition of the press release. She offered to send it to all the Committee members for approval.

Ms. Wood-Beney stated that the Chamber of Commerce had two questionnaires on-line for residents and business owners with a series of questions about redevelopment and revitalization. There are also questions about Westward Drive and another questionnaire can be developed for the Ad-Hoc Committee to allow the citizens to post their comments on-line if they cannot attend a meeting.

Ms. Wood-Beney added that over the past six months she had met with other cities to find out how their revitalization happened and how it impacted their businesses, which she will continue to do for her own education. She also explained that the Chamber had developed a nice relationship with Lowe's through its recent "Spruce up the Springs" project and they are willing to donate paint to the businesses.

## 6. Adjourn

The meeting was duly adjourned at 7:15 p.m.



Lina Bryon  
Board Secretary

Approved as written on: 02-21-2011

Transcription from tape by S. Hitaffer.

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